

## The Italian "Lock-in"

By Emil Lyon.

Workers "locked-in" the factories, with rifles, machine guns, tanks and aeroplanes ready for use in protecting themselves from attack!—this is a new development in the labor struggle.

The present situation in Italy developed out of a contest between the metal workers and the bosses in that industry. To starve the workers into submission the bosses declared a lockout. They expected that by driving the workers out on the streets for a period, as the American Woolen Co. did at Lawrence and other New England points recently, they could quickly starve them into submission.

But the Italian metal workers didn't intend to be starved through a lock-out. They have come to believe that the industries have a different purpose than to serve merely as profit-making machinery for the capitalists. They declared that if the capitalists wouldn't keep the metal works running and give them the opportunity to work, produce goods the country needed, and earn a livelihood for themselves, **they would.**

### Running Industry without Bosses.

They answered the lock-out with a lock-in and the bosses in the metal industry haven't yet recovered from their astonishment. To think that these downtrodden wage-slaves, who have always been more or less content to eat out the hands of the bosses, should have the nerve to take control of the factories, just as if they belonged **to them** and go ahead manufacturing goods without regard to the men of "superior brains" whose property they were! Such a thing has been unheard of before!

The Italian workers are proving themselves equal to the job. They are keeping the industries running. When those industries which supplied raw material to the metal works began to cut off the supply, they quickly found that that method of getting at the metal workers wouldn't work. The workers in other industries showed their solidarity with the metal workers by taking over the raw materials needed and sending them to the metal works.

In order to fully grasp what has happened in

Italy one must imagine the steel workers locking themselves in the steel trust plants and going ahead with the production of steel after the steel trust had shut down the plants. Add to the picture that the coal miners and railway men continue to deliver coal, in spite of the orders of the bosses, that men on the iron ranges send down the ore and the steel trust ships continue to deliver it, all under compulsion of the workers, and one gets an idea of this astounding new development in the labor movement in Italy.

### Where is the Government?

Naturally the question arises, what has become of the government, that is always so quick to step in to protect the private property interests of the bosses and to beat the workers into submission? Why has not the Italian Government used its armed forces to dislodge the workers?

The reason why the government has not acted is not difficult of explanation. Italy has for many months now been on the brink of revolution. The work of organizing Soviets has been underway for some time. The Italian workers are ready for the struggle for control of the state power. The Italian Government hesitates and seeks to bring about a compromise because it fears that an attack upon the metal workers will precipitate the revolutionary struggle for control of the state. It fears the result of such a struggle would be the overthrow of the existing government and the establishment of a Soviet Government.

The Italian workers are not under any illusions as to the situation. They know that they cannot permanently hold the industries which they have seized, without having to deal with the government, which is the representative of the bosses. They know that the workers' revolution cannot be won without first overthrowing the government of the bosses and setting up the Soviets and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. The arms in their hands means that they are ready for that struggle.